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THE
SHEPHERD
OF THE
PYRENEES.



BY MRS. SHERWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER."
"THE LADY OF THE MANOR," &c.

Recommended by the American Sunday School Union.

NEW-YORK,

PUBLISHED FOR OLIVER D. COOKE & CO.—HARTFORD

1827.

ALUMNUS

Vanderpool & Cole, Printers,
NEW-YORK.

THE
SHEPHERD
OF THE PYRENEES.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD.

A LITTLE more than a hundred years ago, there dwelt in Languedoc, which is one of the southern provinces of France, and bordering on the Pyrenean mountains, a certain great Baron and his Lady, who had two children, Theophilus and Sophia.

These children, who were exceedingly beautiful, were twins. Theophilus was the eldest, and Sophia the youngest. It was one of the prettiest sights in the world, to see these little infants asleep, and lying together in one cradle.

Theophilus was larger and browner than Sophia; but his bold and noble features, his lofty brow, and dark curling hair, even in boyhood, gave the promise of what he would be if ever he should arrive at man's estate. While the ruby lips, the dimpled cheeks, the delicate complexion, and au-

burn hair, of his little sister, were, in their kind equally admirable. So that strangers were often brought by their proud parents, and by the dependents of the family, to contemplate the beauties of these little fair ones.

As they advanced in age, their beauty increased, and they seemed to possess every thing amiable or desirable which has been left in the ruin of fallen man.

Theophilus had strong feelings, great natural courage, quickness of comprehension, an excellent memory, much gayety and wit, and a graceful and dignified mien. He possessed with these qualities a great deal of pride, which raised him above what he considered to be a mean action, and made him feel with keenness what he conceived to be an affront.

Sophia partook much of her brother's disposition: but whereas pride and independence were fostered in him, she was taught that delicacy and submission were desirable qualities in a woman. She was kept in much retirement, and taught to conceal her feelings, and to consider her brother as the person on whom she must depend in case of her father's death.

Theophilus and Sophia, as they grew up, were much admired by the world, and looked up to by all around them; nevertheless, they had not one Christian grace.

We are taught, that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, temperance, meekness; and that he whose nature is renewed by the Spirit of God desires beyond all things to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength, and his neighbour as himself. But Theophilus and Sophia had never been taught to lift up their hearts to God in prayer, or to feel their own weakness and depravity. They had heard the name of Christ, it is true, but they felt not the need of a Saviour, and therefore had never been led to seek him. They were not conscious of the uncleanness of their own hearts, and therefore felt no need of the sanctifying influence of the Spirit. One sweet natural feeling, however, they possessed to a strong degree; this was affection for each other.

As they had loved each other in their cradle, so their affection grew with their growth.

Theophilus was generally kept by his tutors and masters in a part of his father's very extensive mansion, remote from the apartment occupied by his sister and her governess; his joy therefore was the greater when he was set free from his tasks, and permitted to play with her: and those were their happiest hours when they were allowed to play in their father's park, followed only by one servant at a distance.

The park was very extensive, including a part

of the irregular ground, valleys, and little hills, hanging coppices, and deep dingles, which spread themselves at the foot of one of the Pyrenees. Here and there were spacious lawns crowned with groves of oak and ash, beyond which appeared, though far distant, the blue tops of the mountains.

It was a great delight to Theophilus and Sophia to climb these heights, and explore these valleys, and to pursue, with unequal steps, the harts and hinds on the extensive lawns.

It happened one day, when they were about fourteen years of age, going further than usual on a fine summer's morning, that they came to a breezy upland, fragrant with thyme; on which they saw an old shepherd sitting on the ground, attentively reading, while his sheep quietly fed around him. No sound was heard in this deep solitude, to disturb the contemplation of the shepherd, but the tinkling of the wether's bell, the bleating of the flock, and the rustling of a waterfall in the valley below.

"Let us go and talk to that old shepherd," said Theophilus, "and ask him what book he may be reading so attentively."

So the children walked up to the shepherd; but no sooner did he see them approach, than he arose, and, bowing humbly, placed his book carefully in his bosom.

Theophilus and Sophia, being struck by the

dignified composure of this old man's deportment, forgot the meanness of his station, and accosted him with less haughtiness than they generally used towards persons of inferior rank to themselves; and having persuaded the old man to sit down on the grass, they placed themselves opposite to him, and began to enter into conversation with him.

And first, they put many questions to the shepherd, concerning his past and present life: to which he replied, by giving a short and simple history of himself.

“ My little friends,” he said, “ I know not whether you may have been informed, that there formerly existed, in certain valleys of the mountains at whose foot we now repose, a set of poor men, called by some, *The Vaudois*, and by others, *The poor Men of Lyons*. These men were remarkable for nothing but their poverty, and their desire to serve God in simplicity, taking his holy book for the guide and rule of their lives, and his promises for their portion.

“ Among these people I was born, and dwelt with them till I was more than forty years of age, being blessed with a pious wife and two sweet infants, and enjoying the society of a venerable mother. But at that period our little community fell under the displeasure of the king. We were driven from our habitations in the valleys, and endured incredible hardships. My aged parent,

my wife, and little children, were not able to endure these afflictions : their bodies sunk under them. One by one, I was deprived of all.—They entered into glory, and I alone remained, a solitary being—yet not solitary,” added the shepherd, looking upward with an expression of countenance which struck Theophilus and Sophia as being almost more than human. “I am not alone; I have great comfort; I am very happy.”

“Happy!” repeated Theophilus, “how can you be happy? You have no pleasures that I can imagine. You have lost your mother! your wife! your children! You are poor: exposed sometimes to cold, sometimes to heat; and, perhaps, have nothing but a poor cottage to lay your head in at night. Your food, no doubt, is also very plain, and your clothes are of the coarsest kind. How then can you be happy?”

The shepherd sighed, and looked with an eye of pity on Theophilus and his sister. “I have enough of all this world’s goods,” he answered, “to satisfy the real necessities of this poor body. I am in the service of your father, and my wages are sufficient to supply me with such things as I really want. In this respect I am better off than many of the prophets and apostles in former times: *for they were destitute, afflicted, and tormented; they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in*

dens and caves of the earth. (Heb. xi. 37, 38.) And even in this present time, how many of my brethren, servants of Christ, being driven from their native valleys, are wanderers upon the earth, wanting the common necessities of life, which I enjoy in security !”

“ But,” said Theophilus, “ I cannot understand what all this can have to do with you. If you are miserable, knowing that others are more so surely cannot mend the matter ! At any rate, such a thought cannot make you actually happy ; and you say that you are happy ; nay, you look happy. And yet, as we before remarked, your situation is such as would make most men truly miserable.”

The shepherd was silent for a moment, and seemed, by his manner, to be in prayer. At length, looking benignly round him, “ You,” he said, “ cannot understand how I, a poor and forlorn old man, can be happy under circumstances which to you appear to be utterly without comfort. You feel pity for me ; you think that I must be miserable. While my prayers for you would be to this intent : that you might be soon brought to feel as I do, and led to discover the instability of earthly enjoyments and possessions ; that thereby you might be early induced to seek those pleasures which, flowing from a heavenly fountain, can never be exhausted.”

“What!” said Theophilus, proudly, “must I not take pleasure in any thing which I possess? Wherein then am I better than yourself?”

The shepherd bowed: “Pardon me,” he said; “you led me, by your questions, to speak of myself, and to utter my sentiments unwarily: I will say no more.”

“Nay,” said Theophilus, “I have a pleasure in hearing you talk; I have never met with any one like you. Speak what is in your mind: I shall not be offended, although I do not promise to believe all you say. You said, that you wished us to be like yourself; to feel as you do: and, I suppose, to be happy in the same way. Now tell us in what way you are happy, and why you wish us to be like yourself.”

“My happiness,” said the shepherd, “is fixed on that foundation which can never fail. *All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* (1 John ii. 16, 17.) He that spendeth the longest and happiest life on earth must die,—must descend into the grave, and be no more seen. At that hour, he must part with all earthly possessions: all will be taken from him; nothing can give him comfort; none of those things can mitigate the dread of eternity. I

therefore consider that man as being the most happy who, whatever his earthly situation may be, hath laid the most sure hold upon what will remain with him at the hour of death."

"Death!" repeated Theophilus hastily and haughtily, "what have I to do with death?"

The old man started, and sighed; and then seriously answered, "*It is written, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.*" (Mark x. 14.)

Theophilus looked shocked and angry; and for a few minutes, could not recover himself. But at length, his good sense prevailing over his ill humour, he said, "Certainly, many persons younger than we are, die; and those are assuredly most happy who are prepared for death, and who have nothing to look back upon but a well-spent life; and we thank you for your good wishes, and hope that your prayers for us will be answered, and that we may do nothing to disgrace our noble ancestry, but may live in honour, and die in peace."

The old shepherd sighed, and gently moved his crook backwards and forwards over the grass as if in deep contemplation; during which time Theophilus and Sophia were silent. At length, raising his meek eye, and fixing it upon Theophilus, "Ah, noble youth," he said, "under what a fatal error you lie! O that the eyes of your un-

derstanding could be opened, that you might be brought to see and know before it be too late, and duly to prize, that alone which can support a dying sinner in the hour of death; that alone which can enable a poor, weak, sinful, old man, such as I am, to contemplate death with composure, nay, with pleasure, and to await in peaceful hope the important change!

“ There is a hope, which is able to comfort in that awful day, when all the pomp of riches, of titles, of honour, all the sweet endearments of the fondest love, the remembrance of the noblest actions, the strongest ties of nature, shall be dissolved; yea, when the heavens shall vanish as a scroll, and all earthly scenes shall be folded up as a garment, there is a hope which, at that time, will become clearer, brighter, stronger, more substantial; and that hope is, Trust in the atonement and death of Christ, by which our sins being washed away, we are presented before God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

“ This is the hope which supported my dying mother and my wife, and enabled me, rejoicing, to give up my children, my last earthly comforts, to death and to corruption; having the blessed assurance, that as they died in Christ, in like manner they should appear with him in glory. And this is that hope which renders these last days of my pilgrimage on earth so exceedingly happy to

me, that the best wish I can bestow on you, the children of my Lord, is, that you may partake of the same blessed assurance."

The shepherd was silent, and Theophilus and Sophia arose to take leave; but before they had gone far, Theophilus returned to ask the shepherd the name of the book which they found him reading.

"It is the Bible," answered the shepherd; "and this copy was given me by my mother on her death-bed."

"The Bible!" said Theophilus, when he returned to his sister, "I have never seen a Bible. I will look for one in my father's library, when I return to the castle."

Theophilus did as he had said: as soon as he got home, he went into the library; and, after long search, found a Bible. It was elegantly bound, and fastened by golden clasps, having been the property of a lady of the family who had been a friend of the *Vaudois*. Theophilus knew that the book was the Bible, because it was lettered on the back; he therefore did not open the clasps, but carried the book to his apartment, waiting what he thought might be a convenient opportunity to peruse it. He placed the book upon a shelf, and soon forgot that he had it. His conversation too with the old shepherd passed from his mind, and for a while he remembered this holy man no more.

When Theophilus and Sophia were fifteen years of age, their parents sent away their tutors and governess, and they were allowed to spend their time in the manner they liked best.

Every indulgence was permitted Theophilus which a young person of his age could desire. His father gave him a beautiful horse; he built him also three noble apartments on one side of his own house, the first of which, a hall or saloon, opened into a garden, and was adorned with a noble portico, the pillars of which were of marble, from whence all the beauties of the garden could be seen. The second apartment was a library filled with all kinds of books, among which was the Bible before mentioned, with its golden clasps, which had never been unloosed since the death of the lady to whom it first belonged. In this library were various beautiful prints and pictures, and a harp for Sophia to play upon when her brother was inclined to enjoy music. The inner apartment was a sleeping-room, in which every thing was prepared which could make sleep sweet.

The garden on which these grand apartments opened was filled with every variety of beautiful shrubs and flowers which the climate would admit of. The hills arose abruptly beyond the garden, with hanging woods, bulging rocks, and a beautiful waterfall, which, tumbling from height to height, here and there hid by the trees, and again

breaking on the view, sparkling and glittering like liquid diamonds, at length formed a mossy channel in the garden, through which it gently flowed. Many sweet birds continually were heard singing among the trees; and these harmonious sounds, added to the sweet smell of the flowers, united in making this garden resemble what we could conceive of Paradise.

When Theophilus was set free from his tutors and daily tasks, and put in possession of his new apartments, his garden, and his beautiful steed, he believed himself to be the happiest of human beings, and was, in his own imagination, greater than a king. He invited his beloved sister to partake of his pleasures, and expressed his desire, that she would spend all the time she possibly could in his apartments.

He had been taught, when a child, to ride; so he found no difficulty in managing his horse. And great was his delight in swiftly coursing about the park, and teaching his horse to prance and paw the ground, that he might display his dexterity in horsemanship.

One morning, when riding in the park, he met the old shepherd carrying a young lamb in his arms. Theophilus stopped his horse, and the old man bowed.

"It is a long while since we last met," said Theophilus, springing from his horse, which he

gave to the servant who followed him: "I thought a good deal of the conversation we had together at one time; but I have lately been so happy, that I have not had time to think of you. "Look," added he, "at this beautiful horse! It is my own. It is swifter than any horse in my father's stable. And I am now set free from my studies, and may amuse myself the whole day. I have a variety of pleasures. My father denies me nothing that I can wish for. And I think now, my good old man, that you must grant that I am happier than you are."

The old man answered, smiling, "I will not argue with you now, because you are not in a state of mind to be convinced by any thing I can say; only remember an old man's words, and think of them hereafter—The pleasures you now enjoy are deceitful; they will fail you. As certainly as man is mortal, your present enjoyments will cease to give you pleasure."

"Yes," said Theophilus, "at death."

"No," answered the old man, "before you are actually laid on your death-bed you will lose your relish for most of them, and death will deprive you of the poor remainder."

"What is the use," answered Theophilus, haughtily, of thus troubling my pleasures: Why do you wish to make me discontented?"

"Sir," answered the shepherd, "I beg pardon;

I did not mean to make you discontented: I only wished to lead you to the true and only fountain of joy. In the Bible, you will find a wiser and surer counsellor than a poor old man."

"The Bible!" said Theophilus, "I will go home and read it." Then calling the servant to bring the horse up, he vaulted into the saddle, saying to the shepherd, "I never see you but you make me dissatisfied with myself.—But," added he, more cheerfully, and with less haughtiness, "you shall not put me out of humour with my beautiful horse." So saying, he galloped away, forgetting the shepherd, and all his sage counsels; neither did he think of looking at his Bible when he returned home.

Some months after this, Theophilus one day, after returning from his usual exercise in the park, which he had, indeed, been taking with little moderation, was seized with a pain in his side, and other symptoms; of which he himself thought lightly, but which alarmed his parents so much, that they sent in great haste for a physician.

Theophilus was condemned by the physician to take much medicine, and what to him was worse, he was forbidden to take his usual exercise on horseback; and his beautiful horse in consequence was sent away.

Theophilus at first submitted with sullenness; but finding the case admitted of no remedy, and

his health and strength now being apparently restored, he comforted himself with his garden, and enjoyed this new pleasure the more, because his beloved Sophia could share it with him.

And now he began to form new pursuits with all the ardour of youth. At the foot of the hill above the garden was a little rock, beautifully adorned with rock plants and moss. In this Theophilus would have a grotto made for himself and his sister. He employed several men to excavate the rock, and collect from the quarries of the mountains specimens of spars and ores to adorn it. The excavation was soon made, and the ores and spars placed where they might have the most agreeable effect. The day the grotto was finished he caused his dinner to be brought there, and his sister's harp. And now Theophilus, sitting in his grotto by his beloved sister, was all gayety, and his eyes danced with youthful joy. His sister delighted him with the sweet melody of her harp till their dinner was ready; after which, while they were sitting together conversing, and forming new plans for the improvement of their garden and grotto, the old shepherd presented himself before them, carrying a small basket of petrefactions, exceedingly rare and curious, which he had found in one of the retired parts of the mountain.

He presented his basket to Theophilus, bowing

humbly; and was about to retire, when Theophilus called him back, and offered him money.

The old man declined taking any present. Upon which Theophilus would have had him sit down, and presented him with a glass of wine.

The shepherd courteously declined the wine, and was again departing, when Theophilus said to him, "Stay a little while: I love to hear you talk, although you always make me displeased with myself. But I wish you to admire my grotto and my garden. Have I not every thing the world can give me to make me happy? And is not all my happiness augmented by the presence of my sister, the sweet companion of my infancy?"

"Indeed," replied the shepherd, "you certainly enjoy every earthly pleasure in a high degree. Give the glory to your heavenly Father; and provide yourself a happiness which will endure for ever, when these less substantial enjoyments shall fail."

"I am a fool," said Theophilus, "to converse as I do with you whenever I see you; for you always embitter my pleasures by your gloomy reflections."

"I beg pardon," answered the shepherd, "I mean not to give pain. But, you do not understand me.—As long as your pleasures are innocent, as your present enjoyments seem to be, why would they be diminished by your rendering them

sacred, by making them subservient to the glory of God? Would you enjoy the present life less, because you had the blessed assurance of everlasting life, and pleasures for evermore at the right-hand of God? Would this grotto, young lady," added he, turning to Sophia, whom he perceived was hearkening to him with interest, "be less agreeable to you, if it were rendered the scene of prayer for the purifying influences of the Spirit? or of contemplation on the glory and excellency of a crucified Saviour? Or would the tones of that harp be less melodious, if drawn forth in the praises of your heavenly Father? Oh! my young friends," added he, with tears in his eyes, "obtain an interest in your Saviour; seek him while he may be found. In all this vast creation, in the universe itself, the cross of Christ is the only substantial anchor of hope, that alone which can support the dying sinner, when the grave and destruction yawn beneath him.—Let God guide you with his counsel, and afterwards he will receive you into glory."

Theophilus was silent, and looked intently on the shepherd; but Sophia asked, "How can we become acquainted with the counsel of God?"

"By studying the Holy Scriptures," answered the shepherd; "they contain the whole counsel of God. They first teach us how man was made innocent, and how he fell by disobedience, in-

curring by his fall temporal and spiritual death ; or, in other words, a corrupt body, and a soul wholly polluted by sin. So that, as man by nature cannot escape disease, and pain, and temporal death, neither is he able to do any thing which is good or acceptable in the sight of God ; and being alienated by sin from his Maker, is under the condemnation of hell."

"What!" said Theophilus, haughtily, 'do you assert, that all mankind are naturally so utterly vile and abominable, as to deserve everlasting punishment?"

"Pardon me," said the shepherd ; "I did not wish to intrude my opinions ; though, when questioned, I felt myself constrained to speak them without reserve."

"Certainly," replied Theophilus, recovering himself, "no one can blame you for so doing. You then believe that all mankind are utterly corrupt."

"I do," said the shepherd ; "and for this reason, that I find it so written in Scripture. And the words of Scripture are confirmed by the experience of all those who, being enlightened by the Spirit of God, direct their attention to the searching of their own hearts."

"You find then by experience," said Theophilus, "that your heart is very wicked?"

"I do," answered the shepherd. "Every na-

tural motion and thought of my heart is evil, and that continually ; and whatever there may be of good in me is not my own, but is the work of the Spirit of God."

" You surprise me," said Theophilus : " I do not feel these motions of sin in my own heart."

" Alas!" replied the shepherd. " you cannot feel sin, till the Spirit of God awakens within you feelings which are contrary to sin. Sin rules over the natural man with an absolute authority, and keeps all his members in subjection, as in sleep or death : but when this sleep or death of sin is disturbed, when a desire to do well is excited in the natural man, and a hatred of sin exerted, then the struggle begins, and then we find the thongs and chains with which we have been bound, and the smart of them becomes intolerable."

" All this is strange to me," said Sophia ; " and if true, you and I, Theophilus, are in this condemnation which the shepherd speaks of."

" But I don't believe it," added Theophilus. " If I, for instance, had been all my life under the dominion of sin, I should have done my master's works. In what respect, old man," continued he, imperiously, " have I lived in sin? You know enough of me to answer that question."

" Sir," said the shepherd, " this conversation has gone further than I foresaw it would. But I

wish to be sincere. My religion teaches me that I ought to honour all men; to give custom to whom custom is due, tribute to whom tribute: I therefore humbly beg, not to be required to pass my judgment on the present company."

"But we will not be offended," said Sophia. "I am curious to know what you think of us; therefore speak of us without reserve."

"I cannot speak of you, and of your brother, in particular," answered the shepherd, "because I have seen very little of you. I have reason, however, to think, that you have been brought up in habits of morality by your parents; and, as I before said, it becomes not a person in my line of life to pass his judgment upon you."

"But," said Sophia, "if you think that we have been restrained by our parents, and you have not yourself seen any thing very wrong in us, what makes you address us as if we were sinners, and under condemnation?"

"Because," said the shepherd, "all mankind are sinners, and all lie under condemnation to whom the death of Christ is not applied by faith."

"But in what respect," said Sophia, "does our sin consist? How can we be sinners if, as you say, we have been restrained from immoral actions by our parents?"

"The seat of sin," replied the shepherd, "is

the heart. Evil actions are but the fruit of this evil heart; and many may be in situations where they may be restrained from breaking out into gross crimes, and yet before God may be grievous sinners. Many are restrained by their friends and relations from shameful and disgraceful actions, and others may be withheld by pride or prudence, whose hearts nevertheless are at enmity with God, and who seek only to please and gratify themselves. Such persons are living in sin, though they may not know it, their affections are perverted, and they are lovers of themselves more than lovers of God. But I again beg pardon; let me humbly entreat you to consult your Bible on these subjects."

So saying, the shepherd departed. And Theophilus said to his sister, "This old man's discourse always disturbs my mind, and makes me uneasy in my present situation; and yet, when I see him, I feel inclined to draw him on to talk. Do, my sister, take your harp, and try to dissipate these uneasy thoughts, and to-morrow we will look for the Bible, and read it."

So Sophia played on her harp, and talked to her brother of their new schemes of improvement, till, insensibly, the impression left by the old shepherd was worn away.

Soon after the grotto of Theophilus was quite finished, he was attacked with a second and more

violent return of his complaint ; and his terrified parents sent for the physician.

More medicines were ordered, and the physician insisted upon it, that he should visit his grotto no more, but remain within his own apartments, viewing only his beloved garden from the marble portico, in which he was allowed to sit during the most temperate part of the day. And his friends were charged to supply him with every kind of amusement which his situation would admit of, and which might tend to render the confinement less irksome to him.

Sophia, urged by affection, redoubled her attentions to him. She was his constant companion ; she read to him, she played to him, she told him stories, she sat with him in the portico, she brought him flowers, and indulged his every fancy as far as lay in her power. And as his complaint was not painful, and his strength as yet not greatly diminished, he was tolerably cheerful, hoping for a speedy renovation of health and restoration to his former freedom.

One lovely afternoon, as Theophilus was sitting in the portico, with his sister, admiring the beauties of his garden as seen from thence, a little lamb, which had escaped from the flock, came frisking along before them ; and soon after appeared the old shepherd, with his crook in his hand, in pursuit of the little wanderer.

“ There,” said Theophilus, “ is our old friend. Do, my sister, call him to us.”

“ Wherefore, brother ?” answered Sophia. “ Have you forgotten that you said his conversation always made you uneasy ?”

“ It is true,” replied Theophilus ; “ and yet I have an inconceivable desire to hear him converse.”

So Sophia, to please her brother, went in pursuit of the old man, and brought him to the steps of the portico.

“ Well, my old friend,” said Theophilus, “ you see me here confined by sickness to my apartment, a good subject for your moralizing. In my case, you have been a true prophet. My pleasures are leaving me before I have lost a taste for them. I am already deprived of my horse, and my grotto ; and what other privations are to follow, I know not.”

Theophilus made this awful speech, not with gravity, but in that spirit of banter so often made use of by thoughtless and profane young persons. But the shepherd seemed not to notice the spirit in which Theophilus spoke. but answered seriously, “ Oh ! my dear young master, be persuaded by me, while there is yet time, while life yet affords you opportunity, to seek the Saviour. Oh ! read your Bible, read, study that precious book. Take for once an old man’s counsel : la-

bour to obtain an interest in the Saviour; cast away all self-sufficiency, and trust to that alone which can support you when *the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.*—(2 Pet. iii. 10.) You have a Bible, no doubt, young lady; if you love your brother, read it to him. Lead him to the Saviour; lead him to the bleeding Lamb; go to him yourself; follow him meekly in the present life, and in that which is to come you shall follow him in glory.”

While the shepherd continued to speak, Theophilus changed colour, and his spirit of bravado forsook him. “Well,” said he to the shepherd, “I will read the Bible, and when I see you again I will tell you what I think of it.”

The shepherd bowed: “I am satisfied,” he replied, and took his leave.

As soon as the shepherd was gone, the Baron and Baroness came into the portico, and spent the remainder of the evening with their children. Theophilus being surrounded by his friends, was very gay; all serious reflections left him, and he thought no more of his promise to the shepherd.

Thus reluctantly is the depraved heart of man drawn to its God. Man is by nature a hater of God, an alien from his Maker, a lover of self: and all the afflictions to which he is liable are hardly enough to bring him back to God; nay, they are

utterly incapable of producing this effect, unless the influence of the Holy Spirit within him co-operates in the glorious work. And we find from sad experience, that every butterfly which crosses the path of the pilgrim on his way to Zion, diverts his attention, and misleads his eye, which should be intently fixed on the guiding star.

Theophilus and Sophia thought no more of the Bible at that time, nor ever, perhaps, would have recollected the old shepherd, had not circumstances again brought them together.

The disease of Theophilus daily gained ground : he was afflicted with a constant cough, his flesh wasted, his strength failed, and he was obliged to submit to new privations ; he was no longer permitted to enjoy the fresh air in the outer apartment, but was confined now to his library and his sleeping-room. His weakness was such, that he lay all day upon a sofa ; his appetite became less ; he had little relish for food ; and was so restless, that he could not bear to hear his sister play upon her harp, or talk, or read to him for any length of time.

The physician visited him daily : and after having tried every thing he could think of, he at length ordered him to drink the infusion of a certain scarce herb, which grew upon the mountains.

Among all the servants of the Baron, no one

was so well acquainted with the plants which grew upon the mountains as was the old shepherd. He therefore undertook to gather this herb, and to bring the infusion of it to his young master.

Theophilus was lying languidly on his couch when the shepherd entered. He started at the sight of him; and the remembrance of their several past conversations rushed upon his mind. He recollected also, at the same moment, that he had broken the promise which he had made to the shepherd the last time they met. A sudden sense of shame flushed his pale cheek, and he raised himself up. "I have not kept my word with you," said Theophilus; "I have never yet looked at my Bible."

"I am sorry for it," replied the shepherd, looking at the youth with concern, "very sorry. You are depriving yourself of great comfort, of what soon may be your only comfort. You have already found, young as you are, how deceitful many earthly pleasures are, how they melt in the hand that grasps them."

"Certainly," replied Theophilus, gravely, "I have had the experience of which you speak. I have been shut out from one pleasure after another, and I have little hope now, that I ever shall partake of these again."

"Oh!" said Sophia, bursting into tears, "sweet, sweet brother, do not speak in this manner. The

same day gave us birth, and I feel that I could not long survive you : do not therefore speak of death : you may yet live many years, to make your sister happy."

"Lady," said the shepherd, "if you really love your brother, do not endeavour to deceive him ; hold not out hopes which cannot be fulfilled. The sentence of death has passed on all mankind ; and whether it may be shortly executed on your brother or not, the Almighty only can decide ; but this is certain, that he has already received several awful warnings ; and it behoves him to inquire seriously, whether he dare appear before God, the righteous Judge of all men, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, confiding in his own righteousness, or whether he will seek the righteousness of the Son of God ; whether he will meet death in his own strength, or whether, with the prophets, and apostles, and holy men of old, he will say, *I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of his righteousness only.*"—(Psalm lxxi. 14.)

"I am not conscious," answered Theophilus, "of any thing I have committed, which should make me afraid of death."

"Sir," said the shepherd, "I would have you to consider, that God is a perfect being, and that all his qualities, or attributes as they are called, are perfect. He is perfectly wise, perfectly holy,

perfectly merciful, perfectly just. Perfect justice cannot forgive sin, nor admit a sinner to happiness. If therefore you have offended the holy law of God, even in the smallest point, you have incurred the penalty of God's displeasure, and are liable to his wrath, and the vengeance of divine justice. You must endeavour therefore to procure the righteousness of a man who never sinned: and being clad in this righteousness, you may safely appear in the presence of a holy God. This man is Christ; God revealed in the flesh; he of whom it was said, He hath fulfilled all righteousness. Apply unto him, and he will preserve you: he will give you your righteousness, your salvation. What are these words of one of his sweetest promises—*Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*"—(Isaiah xli. 10.)

Theophilus sighed, and was silent, and Sophia was almost choked with her tears.—The shepherd bowed, and was retiring, but returned again, and said, "My dear young friends, for once take the advice of an old man, and study your Bible."

"We will," said Theophilus, "depend upon it." So the shepherd departed; and Theophilus selected a servant, who waited at the door, to take the Bible down from the book-case, and

place it on his table. The servant obeyed; the Bible was laid on the table; but the physician coming in, the Bible remained unopened: and though Theophilus thought of it several times during the evening, he still felt unwilling to read it, or to give his mind earnestly to seek after his God.

The next day Theophilus was taken alarmingly worse. He was now unable to leave his bed; he could take little nourishment; he could scarcely bear the light of day; the pain in his side increased; his cough harassed him more continually; his earthly comforts were more and more abridged; he was shut out more and more from the world; and the day of life seemed closing fast upon him.

After a night of agonizing pain, in which death had been brought before him, he, early in the morning, caused his parents to be called to his bed-side. His sister, who had been with him during the greater part of the night, sat weeping by his pillow, when he thus addressed his parents:—

“I am now,” said Theophilus, “brought to see and feel, that I must shortly prepare for death, and I have caused you to be called, my hither tender parents, in order that you may administer some comfort to my mind, which suffers more than my agonized body.—Tell me what hopes have

of happiness beyond the grave? Where can I now find comfort?"

The Baron and Baroness started, and were terrified beyond measure. They were of the number of those persons, of which there have been, and are, too many in France, who being nominally Roman Catholics, in fact have no religion at all, scarcely believing the existence of a Deity. They had therefore no consolation to administer to their son, but looked aghast at him and at each other.

At length the Baroness, bursting into tears, and kissing the hand of her son, said, "My child, my child, do not speak of death; we cannot part with you, we cannot spare you."

"My mother," answered Theophilus, much affected, "I must die. I feel that I must die; lay aside these vain attempts to deceive me, and tell me how I must appear before the Judge of all men."

"Why should you be afraid?" said the Baroness. "If there is a God, a virtuous young man, such as you have been, need not fear to stand before him, and claim the reward of your merits."

"If there is a God!" repeated Theophilus. "If I have a divine Creator and Benefactor, and have hitherto lived in utter neglect and contempt of him, where are my merits towards him? And what have I done for my fellow-creatures? I feel now, at this awful moment," he added, "that, had

I devoted the best of my life, and the strongest powers of my mind, to the service of my God and of my fellow-creatures, I should not dare to appear before my Creator, relying on these good works, and pleading imperfect services in that place where sinless perfection is and must be required. There is a God, Madam," added Theophilus looking intently at his mother, "I feel that there is a God, a just and holy God, and that I must soon stand in his presence, and receive from him my eternal doom!"

"Oh! my brother, my brother," said Sophia, leaning her face, which was wet with many tears, against his shoulder, "I cannot bear to hear you speak in this manner."

"Sophia," said Theophilus, "you cannot comfort me. The more I have loved my Sophia, the more bitter will be the separation which I foresee must so soon take place. No, no," he added, looking wildly around him, "I am come to that hour, when riches take themselves wings; when titles vanish into thin air; when past pleasures assume the sting of serpents; when fathers, mothers, wives, or husbands, can afford no comfort; when the sweetest ties of love," he added, looking tenderly on his sister, "when friendships formed in the cradle must be dissolved; when the eye and the ear can no more administer to our delight; when the loathing stomach refuses food, and the grave yawns beneath the dissolving body—I am

come to that awful moment, and am without one hope to support me."

Theophilus, having exerted himself beyond his strength, now became quite wild, and spoke incoherently; and the physician coming in, was obliged to administer an opiate to him.

After a refreshing sleep, Theophilus awoke at noon-day more composed. His sister was kneeling at the foot of the bed, and being much tired, had fallen asleep in that posture. The servant before mentioned was standing by his master, and again pressed him to see a priest.

"No," said Theophilus, bring me the Bible, which lies neglected on my table."

The servant obeyed: Theophilus unclasped the book, and turned over the leaves. "I want," he said, "to find my Saviour. Where shall I find him?" He looked anxiously at the servant.

"Sir," answered the man, "let me call a priest."

"I want," said poor Theophilus, "to find my Saviour."

The voice of her dear brother awakened Sophia. She started up, and said, "My dear brother, what do you want?"

He pointed to the Bible, which he had dropped on the bed, and said, "I want to find my Saviour."

She took up the Bible, and turned the leaves over and over; but being utterly at a loss what

parts to select, she threw it down, and said, "Oh ! my Theophilus, had we followed the advice of the old shepherd, perhaps we should now have found comfort in this precious book."

"The old shepherd !" repeated the eager Theophilus : "send for him this moment."

Theophilus was obeyed, and the old man came.

When the shepherd appeared, the dying youth extended his hand to him : "Oh ! my friend," he said, "my counsellor, who would have guided me to peace, but I would not, I am now brought to that dreadful hour, that hour so long ago predicted by you, when no earthly thing can satisfy me."

"Sir," replied the shepherd, "you are then arrived at that state in which I wished to see you some years ago. The immortal soul cannot be satisfied by any of the perishable pleasures of earth ; it requires something more. And yet miserable man is so led away by his love of earthly trifles, and is, in fact, such an alien from God, that he will cling to any deceitful hope rather than accept the offered salvation, even the salvation which was purchased by the Son of God. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John iii. 16.)

"But I," said Theophilus, "have no hope, no refuge, no confidence ; I am utterly cast down."

“By what cast down?” said the shepherd.

“By my sins,” replied Theophilus. “You formerly told me that I was a sinner, and that my heart was utterly corrupt and alienated from God. I did not believe it to be so then; but now I find it to be so; there is nothing good in me. Where is my former confidence? Where is my boasting?” added he, sighing, and looking upwards. Then turning eagerly to the shepherd, “Tell me,” he said, “tell me, is there any hope?—any hope for me? Who will stand up for me when I am called into the presence of God?”

The shepherd took up the Bible which lay upon the bed, and read these words, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (Matt. xi. 28.) “These are the words of Christ our Saviour,” added the shepherd; “they are addressed to those who feel the weight of their sins, and labour beneath their intolerable burden. To such the blessed Redeemer saith, *Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*—And again, he saith, *He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*” (John vi. 37.)

“Are those really the words of the Lord Jesus?” replied Theophilus. “You would not surely deceive me at this awful hour.”

“No,” replied the shepherd. “Why should you doubt me? Have I hitherto deceived you? Did I not tell you how you would find yourself on

your death-bed, incapable of receiving comfort from any earthly possessions or distinction? Was I not sincere with you, in the day of your prosperity? and would I deceive you now?"

"No, I think you would not," said Theophilus; "I hope you would not: but I am a grievous sinner. In the eyes of a holy God a creature of impure thoughts, such as I am, must be a loathsome object. Oh, I feel that I cannot be saved! those sweet promises which you but now repeated could not be addressed to me."

"I am under a difficulty with you," replied the shepherd, "from this circumstance, that you have now your religion to learn, at the moment when you are in need of all its consolations."

"But I am willing to learn any thing,—to do any thing," said Theophilus.

The shepherd lifted up his eyes in thanksgiving; then looking benignly on the dying youth, "You are willing," he said, "to do well. Who created this willingness in a heart naturally proud and stubborn? who but God? who having begun a good work in you will assuredly make it complete."

The shepherd then took up the Bible, and read aloud the account of man's creation and fall, as given in the first part of the book of Genesis. Then closing the book, he added, "You are now, my young friend, acquainted with the means by

which man's nature became corrupt. The dreadful effects of the fall of our first parents has descended to their wretched offspring. The first man, Adam, brought temporal and spiritual death upon the earth; and human nature is become so totally and entirely corrupt, that each individual must, as our Saviour himself says, be born again before he can enter into the kingdom: the soul must be renewed by the influences of the Spirit, and the grosser part, that is, the body, must be dissolved before it can be purified."

It was now thought necessary that Theophilus should take some rest, but he would not allow the old man to leave him. His sleep was short, and he awaked calling wildly for the shepherd.

When the old man presented himself, "I thought," said the dying youth, "that you had left me. Oh! do not leave me. If you were gone, I should be alone indeed."

"You speak amiss," replied the shepherd; "I am but a man, and a sinner, like yourself. Look not unto man, but unto God."

"Yes," said Theophilus, "but you will guide me to God."

"With his help I hope to do so," answered the shepherd; "without him we can do nothing."

The next conversation between Theophilus and the shepherd was upon the nature of God, the three sacred persons in the divinity, and the of-

fices of each. He showed how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worked together in the salvation of man: the Father by his love in giving his Son, the Son by his sufferings, and the Holy Spirit by cleansing and purifying the heart.

It was some time before Theophilus could receive these doctrines, and fully comprehend that he must be justified by faith in the death of Christ, and that there was no other means of salvation. He prayed earnestly, however, with the shepherd for faith, and implored, humbly, the teaching of the Spirit.

For a few days, through the mercy of God, the disease which was wearing him out seemed to be at a stand, which gave the shepherd opportunity to carry on the blessed work of instruction. He prayed much with Theophilus and for him, and led him to search his heart, and humble himself at the foot of the cross.

The Baron and Baroness, and the servants of the family, were all unwilling that the shepherd should be so much with Theophilus; but Sophia pleaded hard that her brother should be indulged in his earnest wish of having the old man always with him, and her tears and entreaties prevailed.

And now we come to the closing scene of the life of the young and noble Theophilus. His disease gave him respite for nearly ten days,—a blessed interval,—in which the old shepherd la-

boured unweariedly to lead him in the right way; and though the dying youth was deeply oppressed with a sense of sin, yet it was evident that he grew in grace, and had clearer views of his Saviour. It is true, that he could not as yet apply the promises with comfort to himself, but his zeal for the glory of God and his love for the souls of men from day to day burnt more and more brightly, while his self-abasement and humility became more and more remarkable.

His affection for his sister also became more spiritual; and often, when left alone with her, he exhorted her to consider the welfare of her soul, her immortal soul with such earnestness as only the most holy and ardent love could excite.

He expostulated much and affectionately with his parents on the same subject; nor were any of his attendants considered by him as too mean to be unworthy of his tenderest care for their spiritual welfare.

How sweet and beautiful were the influences of the Spirit, as exemplified in the cases of Theophilus and the shepherd! How was the valley exalted, and the lofty mountain brought low!

At the end of ten days Theophilus was again seized in a more violent and distressing manner than ever. For three days he suffered much in mind and body. Death appeared near at hand, and he could not take hold of any promise. He

was now passing through the valley of the shadow of death; the King of Terrors surrounded him with all his plagues. In his anguish he cried out often to this purpose—*Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?* (Job xiii. 24.) *Why standest thou afar off. O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?* (Psalm x. 1.)

The faithful shepherd during this time never left him, but, kneeling by his bed-side, gently poured the words of comfort into his afflicted ear. “Thy heavenly Father has sent thee these messages,” said the shepherd: “*For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* (Isaiah liv. 7, 8.) *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you.* (John xiv. 18.) *I will appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of Righteousness, The Planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*” (Isaiah lxi. 3.)

Theophilus would sometimes answer the shepherd, and would say, “Those sweet words are not addressed to me: *I am so vile; so very, very vile.*

After three days, however, he became much more composed; the struggle seemed to be over, and the bitterness of death to be past.

He was no longer able to converse with the shepherd; but the expression of his countenance was that of peace, and he more than once said, "I see my Saviour; I am satisfied."

To the last few hours he was evidently pleased to hear the shepherd repeat the words of God in his ear; and once he said, "Your words are sweet to me."

The last person he noticed was his beloved Sophia. He kissed her hand with his cold lips a few hours before he died, and was evidently uneasy when she left him for a moment.

As long as he was able to notice any thing, he would not permit the Bible to be removed from his bed. The last words he spoke distinctly were these: "My Saviour, I come." His last moments were comparatively easy.

Thus died the noble Theophilus, in the nineteenth year of his age, before he had perfectly attained the stature and beauty of manhood. Of him it might be said, *He weakened his strength in the way; he shortened his days.* (Psalm cii 23.)

Ah, what availeth it to Theophilus, in the hour of death, that he was the beloved and only hope of a noble family, that he had been born the heir of vast wealth, that the powers of his mind were

eminent, that his person had given the promise of peculiar beauty, that he once had enjoyed health, that his attainments in learning were admirable, that he had been preserved from grossly immoral habits! Ah, what availed all these advantages! He found that they afforded him not one consolatory reflection, not one solid ground of hope, on his death-bed. Neither could he receive comfort from the Saviour till, by deep suffering, he was compelled utterly to renounce self, and to fall down, wounded and naked, at the foot of the cross. O then let me entreat all you who may read the history of Theophilus, to cast away all false confidences, and, without loss of time, to throw yourselves with him, and with all the saints and holy men of old, helpless and self-abased at the foot of the cross.

Theophilus was buried, by his own particular desire, in an ancient burying-ground of the Vaudois, situated in one of the most solitary valleys of the Pyrenees, near the graves of certain individuals of his own family, who had formerly favoured these holy persons, and professed the same faith with the Poor Men of Lyons.

A very few months afterwards, his sister Sophia followed her brother to his grave, she being immediately after his death seized with the same fatal disease which had shortened his days; the progress of which was hastened by grief for her beloved Theophilus.

The old shepherd attended Sophia on her death-bed; and when he saw her also die in peace and holy hope, he exclaimed, in the words of old Simeon, “ *Now let thy servant depart in peace, for I have seen thy salvation!* ”

It is not known in what manner the parents of Theophilus and Sophia ended their days, but we hope that their afflictions were sanctified to them; and we have reason to think well of them, for it is certain that they kept the old shepherd in their family as long as he lived, and took great pleasure in hearing him converse.

Sophia was buried in the same grave with her brother, by her own particular request; and the following words were engraved on their tombstone:

Sacred to the Memory

OF

THEOPHILUS AND SOPHIA,

The only children of the

BARON OF ————,

Who died in the Year of our Lord, 1721,

In the nineteenth Year of their Ages,

Trusting for Salvation in Christ only, and for Pardon
and Peace through his Death.

*They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and
in their death they were not divided.—2 Sam.
i. 23;*

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